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Book Review: Galvanized Yankees on the Upper Missouri: The Face of Loyalty

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Galvanized Yankees on the Upper Missouri: The Face of Loyalty. By Michele Tucker Butts. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2003. xiv + 292 pp. Photographs, map, illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Visitors to Fort Rice State Historic Site have little idea of the drama that took place there during the first few years after its construction in 1864. The site's historical marker contains no mention of the important task rendered by former Confederate soldiers who became known as "the Galvanized Yankees."

Galvanized Yankees on the Upper Missouri: The Face of Loyalty provides a much needed remedy. The book studies one particular unit, the six companies of the First US Volunteer Infantry, made up primarily of Confederate prisoners of war, and its subsequent service at Fort Rice, Dakota Territory. Readers will leave the volume better appreciating the complexities of leadership, of upheaval in people's lives, of the struggle to survive in harsh circumstances and environments, and, ultimately, how all this contributed to post-Civil War "nation building."

The interesting background analysis of the Confederate POWs who "volunteered" for this service is narrated in chapter 2, supplemented by the "spreadsheet" shown in appendix 1, information crucial to the book's real point: that an examination of the history of the First

US Volunteer Infantry yields a better understanding of "the face of loyalty."

Michele Tucker Butts describes the multiplicity of issues with which this unit of volunteers contended on the Great Plains of Dakota Territory, including the aftermath of the battles at Whitestone Hill and Killdeer Mountain. Proof is provided that the conflict of ideas and upheaval of lives during this period was shared by both Caucasians and Native Americans. This reader was particularly interested in the material concerning Two Bears, in the wake of the battle at Whitestone Hill, now a State Historic Site.

The "galvanized yankees" contended with Indian attacks and depredations, dealt with disease, scurvy, near starvation, bitter cold winter weather, a sweltering summer, lack of communication with loved ones, and a myriad of other problems, yet also enjoyed recreational diversions. Using accounts gleaned from soldier letters and the newspaper *Frontier Scout*, Butts contends that all of these experiences played a significant role in the settlement of the West.

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